

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, before I begin my special order on prescription drugs, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) if he would like to finish his thought.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and just say that the point I wanted to make was that economists argue about what is the yield on research, the economic yield on dollars spent on research, but they argue about whether it is 20 percent or 30 percent, not whether it is 2 or 3 percent. And it is a sound investment.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago the Office of Personnel Management announced that premiums for the Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan would increase by 9 percent next year, the third straight year of large increases. Last month, final figures were in for the number of seniors that will be dropped from their Medicare managed care plan come January 1: 395,000 elderly Americans. Last year, 400,000 were dropped. Most of the remaining plans are curtailing or eliminating prescription drug benefits.

Those are the numbers. Here are the stories. Last month, I received a letter from a 71-year-old widow in Sheffield Lake, Ohio, who had taken a part-time job to help pay for her prescription drugs. Until United Health Care pulled out of her county and left her without a health plan, she had some drug coverage, but just one of her medications, lipitor, absorbed the entire benefit.

I spoke with a woman recently in Elyria, Ohio, who spends \$350 out of her \$808 monthly Social Security check on prescription drugs.

What is the common thread here? The high cost of prescription drugs. Prescription drug spending in the U.S. increased 84 percent between 1993 and 1998. The American public is right to wonder why we are not doing something about that in this Congress. The truth is, what has held us back is a threat. The drug industry says if we do not leave drug prices alone, they will not produce any new drugs.

I believe it is time we use market forces, and by that I mean good old-fashioned competition, to challenge that threat. We can introduce more competition in the prescription drug market and still foster medical innovation.

We need information to examine the industry's claims that U.S. prices are where they need to be. I introduced last week a bill, the Affordable Prescription Drug Act, that addresses these issues head on. Drawing from intellectual property laws already in place in the United States for other products in which access is an issue, such as pollution control devices under the Clean Air Act, my bill would establish product licensing for prescription drugs.

If, based on criteria by the Department of Commerce, a drug price is so outrageously high that it bears no resemblance to pricing norms for other industries, the Federal Government could require drug companies to license their patent to generic drug companies. The generic companies could sell competing products before the brand name patent expires, paying the patent holder royalties for that right. The patent holder would still be amply rewarded for being first in the market, and Americans would benefit from competitively driven prices. Drug prices would then come down.

The bill would require drug companies to provide audited, detailed information on drug company expenses. And given that these companies are asking us to accept the status quo, in terms of high drug prices, the status quo that has bankrupted seniors and ignited health care inflation, they have kept us guessing about their true cost for all too long.

This is not some brand new untried proposal. Product licensing works in England. It works in France. It works in Israel. It works in Germany; it has worked in Canada. But there is another part of this issue. Through the National Institutes of Health, American taxpayers finance 42 percent of the research and development that generates new drugs. Private foundations, State and local governments, and other non-industry sources kick in another 11 percent. So the drug industry funds less than half of the research and development of new drugs.

In addition, the dollars that the drug companies do spend on research, the U.S. Congress has bestowed generous tax breaks on those dollars for the drug companies. At the same time, drug prices in the United States are twice or three times or four times what they are in every other country in the world.

So get this. Half the cost of prescription drug research and development is borne by U.S. taxpayers. U.S. taxpayers then give tax breaks for the money that they do spend for the research on prescription drugs by the drug companies. And American taxpayers are then rewarded by the drug companies by being charged the highest prices in the world, double, triple, four times what those prices are.

Mr. Speaker, it is time this Congress pass the Affordable Prescription Drug Act.

ENHANCING INFRASTRUCTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. METCALF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, citizens chronically complain about the state of America's public capital, about the di-

lapidated school buildings, condemned highway bridges, contaminated water supplies, and other shortcomings of the public infrastructure. In addition to inflicting inconvenience and endangering health, the inadequacy of the public infrastructure adversely affects productivity and the growth of the economy. Public investment, private investment, and productivity are intimately linked.

For more than two decades, Washington has retreated from public investment as costs of entitlements and of the interest payable on rapidly rising debt have mounted dramatically. State and local governments, albeit to a lesser extent, have also slowed investment. Their taxpayers became more frequently reluctant to approve bond issues to finance infrastructure. Whereas in the early 1970s, nondefense public investment accounted for 3.2 percent of the GDP, it now accounts for only 2.5 percent.

Widespread neglect of maintenance has contributed substantially to the failure of the stock of public capital assets to keep pace with the Nation's needs.

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For instance, the real nondefense public capital stock expanded in the past decades by a pace only half that set in the earlier postwar World War II period.

Evidence of failures to maintain and improve infrastructure is seen every day in such problems as unsafe bridges, urban decay, dilapidated and overcrowded schools, and inadequate airports.

The General Accounting Office study finds that education is seriously handicapped by deteriorating school buildings and that an investment of \$110 billion is needed to bring them up to minimally accepted conditions. These problems take a toll in less visible and perhaps even more important ways, in unsatisfactory gains in private sector productivity, and a diminished rise in real income for the Nation at large, seemingly endless traffic jams, disruption to commuter rail service, and backed-up airport runways. And that is everyday experiences for Americans. They spell waste and inefficiency for the economy at large.

Congestion on the Nation's highways alone cost the Nation some \$100 billion a year. Let me repeat that. Congestion on the Nation's highways alone cost the Nation some \$100 billion a year according to a Competitiveness Policy Council estimate in 1993. And that was 1993. It does not include the cost of added pollution and wear and tear on the vehicles.

That is the bad news. Now the good news. There is help on the way in the form of legislation directly targeted for infrastructure renewal. This legislation is designed to help the Nation

take a significant step toward overcoming its infrastructure deficit and promoting the productivity needed to meet the competitive challenges of the 21st century. The plan is fiscally sound. It follows the best accounting procedures of the private sector and is designed to recognize the statutes that mandate a balanced Federal budget.

In salient ways it advances sound fiscal operation. The plan would provide \$50 billion a year for mortgage loans to State and local governments for capital investments in types of projects specified by Congress and the President. These mortgage loans would be at zero interest. They would thereby cut the overall costs to local governments of the projects at least in half, depending on the prevailing interest rate for local and State taxpayers.

The principals of these loans would be paid in annual installments. Repayment would depend upon the type of project, but no mortgage would be for a period of more than 30 years. The simple fact is that the Nation is falling behind. Infrastructure improvements will enhance our economy, provide new jobs, increase safety for citizens, and help us compete in the global marketplace. This bill is necessary now to begin to rebuild our vital infrastructure as soon as possible.

TECHNOLOGY AND AMERICA'S FUTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I am here this afternoon to say a few words about why research and technology is important to America. For me, it is a simple story. Technology gives people the tools to live better lives, beginning with the discovery of fire on a winter night somewhere back in history. Technology creates jobs, raises standards of living, and allows people to live longer and fuller lives.

My home, in the Ninth District of Texas, has really three prime examples of the power of new technologies to spur growth and create opportunities: petroleum, space, and medicine.

In my hometown of Beaumont, in 1901, an era began when oil drillers hit the Lucas Gusher in Spindletop. By the end of that year, Spindletop's production exceeded all the rest of the world combined. The technologies that unfolded in the following decade in the use of automobiles, aircraft, petroleum refining totally changed the shape of our world, making mobility a commonplace rather than a luxury for the wealthy, allowing average Americans to enjoy the personal freedom to travel, to work, to shop, just to have fun, for pleasure.

Almost a hundred years later, technology continues to find new uses for

our hydrocarbon resources and to make transportation more safe and more compatible with the environment. Beaumont and East Texas still have a major share of America's petroleum refining and petrochemical manufacturing capacity. And what keeps the industry a vigorous source of employment everyone recognizes is research and technological innovation.

Energy, oil, and chemicals are increasingly international industries. They have to compete successfully with industries worldwide in the field of efficiency and innovation, and they need to find new ways to minimize their impact on the environment. The road to those goals is paved by research.

A few miles southwest of Spindletop is the Johnson Space Center, one of the major centers of America's space program. As the Lucas Gusher celebrated the beginning of the 20th century, the International Space Station, managed by the Johnson Space Center, will mark the beginning of the 21st century. This is the largest space project in the history and a collaboration between the United States, Canada, the member states of the European Space Agency, Japan, Russia, and Brazil to build a laboratory in permanent orbit around the Earth.

Where will this step lead us? Space station research and medicine and biomedical technologies will help open the door to new advances in health care, research, and physical sciences and engineering; will enable development of a new generation of materials for optical computing, technologies for increased efficiencies engines, and a host of other advances that we cannot even predict.

The Space Station will be advancing knowledge in the basic sciences across the spectrum and providing opportunity for commercial research and development opportunity as well. And on the Space Station we will also be developing a whole spectrum of space technologies that will enable a tremendous expansion of our capabilities for commerce and exploration.

The course of human space exploration is not set today, but I believe that humans will over the course of the next century make the trip to Mars if not a routine, then at least a regular, event. America should lead that chapter in the history of humanity.

One of the things that we can predict about the 21st century is that our citizens will increasingly find themselves in competition with labor from around the world. This competition does not have to be a zero-sum game where they can get richer by making any neighbor poorer. The 21st century can be a win-win game if advances in research and technology give our workers the knowledge and the tools needed to continue to lead the growth of prosperity in the global economy.

It is obvious to me that research is not a luxury. It is a necessity. We have to make the investments necessary to make sure that the economic opportunity made possible by technology-led growth are available to our children's generation and to make sure that we can maintain our standard of living and to improve our stewardship of the environment, to make sure that our longer lives are healthier, richer, and less expensive medically, to manage the continued growth of the world's population, and to open the universe to the continuing epic of human discovery.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I ask that as we proceed through the next few weeks to negotiate our final appropriations decisions for fiscal 2000 that we remember the importance of research and the importance of agencies like NASA, the National Science Foundation, and the National Institutes of Health to our country's future.

CLEAN POWER PLANT ACT OF 1999

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Clean Power Plant Act of 1999, a bill to set uniform emissions standards for all electric generating units operating in the United States.

I am pleased to be joined by 18 original cosponsors of both parties and from throughout the country. As we approach the 30-year anniversary of the Clean Air Act, we should take stock of all that it has accomplished to clean our air, improve public health and create a better environment.

We must also, however, recognize that the clean air act and its amendments have not fully solved the problem of the air pollution in this country. In my home State of Maine we routinely see unhealthy levels of smog during the summer ozone season. We still suffer the effects of acid rain and mercury pollution in our rivers, lakes, and streams; and we are only beginning to understand the effect of greenhouse gases which have helped make the 1990's the hottest decade on record.

When we look at the sources of air pollution in America today, one sector stands out as a glaring problem, eclipsing virtually every other source of pollution in the Nation. It is the electric generating sector which for nearly 30 years has evaded the full regulations of the Clean Air Act.

More than three out of every four power plants in the U.S. are grandfathered from having to comply with the act's emission standards and legally pollute at four to 10 times the rates allowed for new plants. When Congress passed the clean air act, it assumed that these grandfathered plants